SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2020

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by ..... [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans and in English at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively on HF and various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed on Echolink by Johan, ZS6JPL. The audio and text bulletins can be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za. To join the bulletin mailing list, send an email to the SARL Secretary.

In the news today:

THE SPRING ZS SOTA ACTIVITY DAY ON 24 SEPTEMBER

THE SARL VHF WORKGROUP ANNOUNCED AN EXCITING MULTI-MODE 2 METER BEACON PROGRAMME

and

ANALYSIS DETERMINES WE ARE IN SOLAR CYCLE 25

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

THE SPRING ZS SOTA ACTIVITY DAY ON 24 SEPTEMBER

This is a fun event to encourage radio amateurs to participate in the Summits on the Air (SOTA) programme. The SOTA Activity Day is open to all radio amateurs and all activations must be according to the SOTA rules. The Activity Day runs from 00:00 to 23:59 CAT on Thursday 24 September 2020, Heritage Day, with activity on all amateur bands and modes. The exchange is an RS, RST, or RSQ report and the SOTA reference.

Both activators and hunters must upload their SOTA log to the SOTA Database as soon as possible after the Activity Day. The points for the Activity Day will

be calculated from the logs entered into the SOTA database by the ZS SOTA Management team. Read all the rules on page 67 of the 2020 Blue Book.

RADIO AMATEUR EXAMINATION NEWS

The results of the August 2020 RAE have been sent to each candidate and those who passed the exam can get on the air. Please be patient as the RAE process is finalised. ICASA will be issuing your licence as they work through the exam documentation.

The SARL Welcoming Pack will be e-mailed to candidates starting in next week, so keep an eye on your inbox.

The Registration process for the next RAE opened yesterday Saturday 19 September and will close on Friday 6 November 2020, not late registration will be accepted. The exam date has been set for 10:00 CAT on Saturday 5 December 2020. Information has been sent to the various exam centres.

THE SARL VHF WORKGROUP ANNOUNCES AN EXCITING MULTI-MODE 2 METRE BEACON PROGRAMME

Following the successful launch of the 2 metre Bethlehem beacon in December 2019, the VHF Working Group has been investigating digital options so that a reverse beacon network could be established to monitor the various propagation modes, such as tropospheric propagation and others. The reverse beacon network will be able to send SMS alerts when an opening occurs. The current CW signal is not suitable for reverse beacon monitoring.

At its monthly meeting this past week, the group agreed to develop a multimode beacon network with next-generation beacons in Cape Town, the Karoo, and at the current Bethlehem site. The new beacons will transmit a digital signal, a Morse code signal, and a continuous tone that can be used for frequency calibration.

The estimated cost of the three beacons will be around R60 000 which will have to collected through crowdfunding and donations. AMSAT SA, whose interest beside satellites, is also weak signal communication, has started the fund with a donation of R5 000.

Support the future of amateur radio technology by contributing to the project. Donations can be made by EFT. The account is SARL, ABSA Account No: 407 158 8849, Branch code 632 005. The reference must be Beacon and your call sign or surname. Please send a copy of the EFT to admin@sarl.org.za. Donations

will be acknowledged weekly on the SARL website. A special beacon project page will be created.

Over the next few weeks more details will be included in SARL News on the web and in Brian Jacobs' "Focus on VHF and above" broadcast in Amateur Radio Today.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.

THE AMSAT-DL ONLINE SYMPOSIUM ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2020

Unfortunately, the AMSAT-DL Symposium planned for 26 and 27 September 2020 cannot take place this year in the usual manner. Instead, we will broadcast the symposium as an "online" meeting in DATV via the broadband transponder of QO-100 and on the Internet on the YouTube channel of AMSAT-DL at www.youtube.com/user/amsatdl. Due to the international audience, most of the lectures will be held in English. The current schedule can be found on the AMSAT-DL homepage at https://amsat-dl.org.

THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION RELEASES THE 2020 ITU RADIO REGULATIONS

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has published the 2020 ITU Radio Regulations, the international treaty governing the global use of RF spectrum and satellite orbits. The publication contains the complete texts of the Radio Regulations adopted during the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19), held last year in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. Available in all six of ITU's official languages, the 2020 ITU Radio Regulations are in effect for all signatory parties on 1 January 2021. Electronic versions are free and the "traditional four-volume boxed set," as well as a multilingual DVD, will be available for purchase in the coming weeks, the ITU said.

"The publication of the Radio Regulations is the culmination of the hard work and intense deliberations that took place during WRC-19," said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao. "Efficient and economical use of the naturally limited radio frequency spectrum is key to ensuring we bring the benefits of connectivity and digital transformation to people everywhere. The ITU Radio Regulations are a vital vehicle for this endeavour."

The ITU said that, when it comes to allocating radio frequencies, including sharing and harmonizing their use for different purposes, the Radio Regulations are the ultimate tool. "They ensure the use of the RF spectrum is rational, equitable, efficient, and economical, all while aiming to prevent harmful interference between different radio services," the ITU said. The Radio Regulations govern 40 radiocommunication services and are designed to protect existing radio services while enabling the introduction of new and enhanced services.

ANALYSIS DETERMINES WE ARE IN SOLAR CYCLE 25

It is now official. The solar minimum between Solar Cycles 24 and 25, the period when the sun is least active, occurred in December 2019, when the 13-month smoothed sunspot number fell to 1,8. This is according to the Solar Cycle 25 Prediction Panel, co-chaired by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). We are now in Solar Cycle 25, with peak sunspot activity expected in 2025, the panel said. The panel expressed high confidence that Solar Cycle 25 will break the trend of weakening solar activity seen over the past four cycles.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to remain at low levels. There are currently no sunspot regions visible. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. The 15 to 40 m bands will, especially around sunrise and sunset, provide some good DX fun. For more information, please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za

Finally, a diary of some upcoming events:

Today – the SARL VHF/UHF Digital Contest and the All Africa DX Contest

22 September – the Spring Equinox (15:31 CAT)

24 September - Heritage Day and the ZS SOTA Party and National Braai Day

26 and 27 September – the CQ WW RTTY Contest

1 October – the SARL 80 m QSO Party

3 October – AWA AM Valve QSO Party

4 October – AWA SSB Valve QSO Party and the RSGB DX contest

3 and 4 October - the FMH Portable Operations Challenge

10 October – the Spring QRP Contest

11 to 16 October – the IARU Region 1 Virtual General Conference

17 October – CQ Hou Koers

17 and 18 October – JOTA

24 and 25 October – the CQ WW DX SSB contest

To conclude our bulletin, a recap of our main news story:

The SOTA Activity Day is open to all radio amateurs and all activations must be according to the SOTA rules. The Activity Day runs from 00:00 to 23:59 CAT on Thursday 24 September 2020, Heritage Day, with activity on all amateur bands and modes. The exchange is an RS, RST, or RSQ report and the SOTA reference.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans, if possible, by following the News Inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items to include in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly radio program, Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 CAT. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band by courtesy of Louis, ZS5LP. A rebroadcast by Andy, ZS6ADY, can be heard on Monday evenings at 19:30 CAT on 3 620 kHz.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by email to artoday@sarl.org.za.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Andy Cairns ZS6ADY, edited by Herman Erasmus ZS6CTA and read by .....

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.